



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE agents seize \$2 million, 32 guns at Skokie storage facility** *Cash and weapons allegedly belong to international drug traffickers*

CHICAGO — More than \$2 million and 32 weapons belonging to an international drug trafficking organization were seized earlier this month at a self-storage facility in north suburban Skokie, Ill. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents made the seizure as part of an investigation into a criminal organization that allegedly smuggles 8,000 pounds of marijuana each month from Mexico to Chicago.

The seizure came as a result of an ICE investigation in Arizona into a drug trafficking organization allegedly operating in Sonora, Mexico, southern Arizona and Chicago. The investigation was initiated in January 2004 after ICE received information that the organization was allegedly smuggling approximately 4,000 pounds of marijuana every other week from Mexico to Chicago and storing its drug smuggling proceeds and guns at a self-storage facility in Skokie.

Working on a tip, Chicago ICE agents executed a consent search May 5 at Storage USA, 7540 N. McCormick Blvd, Skokie, and seized \$2,033,700 in U.S. currency. Also seized were 22 pistols, 6 rifles and 4 shotguns, the largest gun seizure in ICE's history in the Chicagoland area.

"Those who think that they can smuggle their illegal drugs, money and guns through our borders and into our cities need to think twice," said Elissa A. Brown, special agent-in-charge of ICE's Chicago office. "This is another example of ICE special agents working hard to protect our borders from all threats to the United States, including illegal narcotics."

No arrests have been made in connection to this seizure; however, the ICE investigation into this case is ongoing.

We encourage the public to report any suspicious activity by calling ICE's toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. The lines are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

#ICE#

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*